

Amendment
Serial No. 10/623,679
Attorney Docket No. 030891

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-28 are pending in this application, of which claims 1, 21, 23, 26 and 27 have been amended. No new claims have been added. Claim 4 has been cancelled in this Response.

(1) Claims 1-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by Ishibashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,579,657 B1).

Claims 1, 21, 23, 26 and 27 have been amended, whose basis is found at claim 4, and page 36, lines 19-23. The surfactants disclosed by Ishibashi et al. are FLORADE (a fluorocarbon nonionic surfactant) and NONIPOLE (a non-ionic polyoxyethylene nonylphenyl ether type surfactant). Col. 9, lines 6-11. The rejection of the amended claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) is not supported by Ishibashi et al. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

(2) Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Suetsugu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,329,119) in view of Shimada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,416,939).

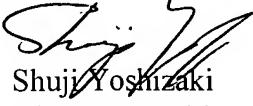
As explained above, claims 1 and 21 have been amended. Neither of the cited references discloses the newly incorporated limitations of claims 1 and 21. In particular, both references of Suetsugu et al. and Shimada et al. are directed to organic solvent based resist compositions, which are different from the resist pattern thickening material including pure water as recited in

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claims 1 and 21. Thus, even a combination of the references does not make the present invention, and also, there is no motivation to modify the references to obtain the claimed invention. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

(3) In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date. If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case. If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,
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